



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement in Response to Head of Center in Bishkek, Ambassador Markus Müller

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Bruce Connuck
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 27, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes Ambassador Müller to the Permanent Council today, and wishes to thank him for his excellent report. Ambassador Müller, we very much appreciate the excellent work that the Center, all of its staff and you personally have been doing in a very challenging, yet exciting, time in Kyrgyzstan's history.

The United States very strongly supports the OSCE Center in Bishkek and the full range of its activities. The Center is a leader in demonstrating OSCE's effectiveness and ability to contribute in dynamic situations, setting a fine example for other field presences. We look forward to working with the Center in the coming year.

The United States has long taken a comprehensive view of security and believes strongly that the work of the Center across the full range of OSCE activities must be supported. We have in fact provided substantial funds in extra-budgetary contributions to Center projects in all three dimensions. We firmly believe that in order to build security, prosperity, and democracy, work in all three dimensions is both important and mutually reinforcing, and that there is more to be accomplished in each.

After the events of March 2005, the OSCE developed a Work Plan, in coordination with Kyrgyz authorities, to assist Kyrgyzstan in achieving lasting political and economic stability. The Plan significantly broadened the Center's activities in key areas such as election support, security assistance, and media development - all relevant to Kyrgyzstan's democratic transition.

The United States supports the Center's continuing work on election reform. The Presidential elections in July marked an important step forward in Kyrgyzstan's democratic development and showed tangible progress on meeting OSCE commitments. Working with Kyrgyz authorities, the Center and ODIHR can assist in ensuring that this progress is furthered, institutionalized and strengthened for future elections.

We also believe that the Center can assist in the constitutional reform process. It is important that the process be transparent, and that there be a broad engagement of all stakeholders as well as public discussion. It is equally important that genuine checks and balances be instituted.

We know that combating corruption is high on the agenda of the Kyrgyz Government, which has adopted a national anti-corruption strategy and action plan, as well as issuing a Presidential Decree to establish an independent anti-corruption agency. We believe that the OSCE - together with other international organizations - can assist the Government with this critical initiative.

The creation of a modern, well-trained, and multi-ethnic police institution is indispensable in order to fight corruption effectively. Such a force, we believe, must not only be accountable to Kyrgyzstan's political leadership but also to the broad public that it serves and to the needs of society at large. We urge our fellow participating States to join Belgium, Norway, France, the Netherlands and the United States in making extra-budgetary contributions to the Center's Interim Police Assistance Program.

Helping Kyrgyzstan to comprehensively reform its police system should remain a key Center activity and focus. Such a reform process will take not place overnight, but will require long-term, consistent, and continuous financial assistance, as Ambassador Müller has pointed out. For this reason, we think that we should start looking at the feasibility of including the costs of policing activities in the Unified Budget, as is done with all of our Balkan missions, rather than funding this key activity through extra-budgetary contributions.

OSCE activities in the economic and environmental dimension are also of great importance and directly relevant to Kyrgyzstan's needs, particularly in the areas of developing institutions, legislation, and legal systems needed to enable healthy, transparent and successful market-based economies.

We support the Center's continued work with Kyrgyz authorities to combat trafficking in human beings as well. This is an international scourge that we must all fight together.

Once again we would like to thank Ambassador Müller and his staff for all their efforts. Ambassador, we wish you and your staff the very best.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.